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Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES ON HYMN WRITING
CULMINATING IN REFORMATION PSALMODY AND HYMNODY

By

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I.

INTRODUCTION.

A. The Beginnings of Religious Song.

Religious song is as old as the human race. The date of its inauguration cannot be fixed. Neither can compositions be drawn from the store-house of antiquity and authoritative declaration be made that these are the first expressions of the human soul in worshipful song. But that there was such in primitive times, crude as it must have been, is without question, for it has been the inherent nature of the soul of man to supplicate, to reverence, to try to apprehend a divine being, and one of his chief methods of expression has been musical utterances. Also, constant scientific research has proven the truth of the premise, as archaeology, theology and anthropology have brought these to light.

It is not within the confines of this treatise, however, to delve into the mysteries of the distant past to resurrect authentic evidences of pre-existing fact, on which to build this structure. Those which have already been discovered will be used as a foundation for the development of the subject of Christian

Church singing at the beginning of the Protestant era.

B. Sources From Which Data is Gathered.

Such a subject will require continual reference to the experiences and practices of the ancient Hebrew race, for it is from their intense religious emotions that their musical utterances come. Furthermore, much of the foundation for the Early Church hymnody is laid in the Jewish temple songs, and it will be seen what important a place they held in the era of the Protestant Revolution.

The chief source of these is the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, and the particular section is that which is known as the Psalms. Of this Mrs. Rundle Charles has written: "In the Book of Psalms the third person of the historical narratives, the 'Thus saith the Lord' of the Law and the Prophets, is exchanged for the supplicating or rejoicing 'O Lord, My God,' 'Unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.' Beginning often in the tumultuous depths, these psalms soar into the calm light of heaven..... The music of all nature, moreover, is gath-

ered into these wonderful psalms." (7)

Not only is the Hebrew influence observed in formation and growth of the hymn through the centuries, but that of the Greek is also apparent. It is stated by some authorities that the songs of the early Christians in catacombs and caves were of Greek origin with Hebrew influence -- "as most of these early Christians lived in Rome, they followed the rules of music the Romans learned from the Greeks. So our church music was influenced both by the Hebrew and Greeks." (2)

The Romans, too, had their contribution to make. After emperors like Constantine embraced and promoted Christianity, the Romans began to realize the beauty and value of the teachings of Jesus, and accepted his religion. Among these were members of the upper classes who had been educated in Greek culture and were the owners of musical instruments of these beauty-loving artists. And so, the chants composed for the kithara in Rome were carried over into Christian song.

Not having beautiful temples or palaces in which to worship; of necessity having to minimize all sounds

of human voice lest their hiding places be disclosed; conscientiously avoiding the use of music that savored of the wild dance music of Grecian festivals; being uneducated and poor, thus hindering them from the purchase of instruments and learning to play them -- these are some of the chief reasons that their musical utterances were rather crude. Their chanting resembled the soft monotonous droning of voices, similar to that of the Jews in their temple services.

"In the development of German Protestant music the religious folk song holds a place analogous to that of the Gregorian chant in the building up of the music of the Mediaeval Catholic Church..... The chorales were therefore derived from three sources: (1) the melodies of the Catholic ritual chant; (2) the pre-Reformation religious folk-song; (3) the secular folk song." (9)

The German hymn dates back to the earliest times as the natural expression of the religion of these Teutonic people. Their love for poetry and song impelled them to produce a large number of sacred lyrics for private devotion, and translations of the Psalter and

Latin hymns in verse, between the ninth and the sixteenth centuries.

So powerful was the Teutonic folk song that it has been considered on an equality with the Gregorian chant in effectiveness. Incorporated in the service of the pre-Reformation period were songs in praise of the Virgin, which were often rather secular in style, since there was not a marked difference between sacred and secular music at this time. Not only were there songs to and about the Virgin Mary, but love songs, battle songs, drinking, dance, knights', hunters', children's songs, etc.

From these crude beginnings there developed a form of metrical religious poetry and music that swayed Reformation thinking and practice, and has subsequently become one of the foremost factors in Protestant worship.

II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN SONG.

A. Psalm Singing in the Early Church.

1. The ascendancy of the hymn through the first four centuries.

"In theory, style, usage, and probably to some extent in actual melodies also, the music of the primitive church forms an unbroken line with the music of pre-Christian antiquity." (8) Musically, the transition from the ancient Jewish Church to the Early Christian Church was gradual. The disciples continued to assemble in the temple regularly for worship, and continued to sing the songs of Zion from the Psalms.

At the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper, the account is given of Jesus and his disciples ending the ceremony with a hymn. This was undoubtedly the "great Hallel" of the Jewish Passover celebration. (Psalms 115 - 118). After exegetical analysis, the conclusion may be reached that the Greek word, Hymn, and its Hebrew and Syriac equivalents, were commonly used at the time of Christ's coming to signify a song of praise to God, which passed on to the Christian Church.

In Acts 16:25 we find the next reference to hymn-singing in the New Testament.-- Paul and Silas, "praying were hymning The God." "What these hymns were is doubtful; scarcely the Psalms. St. James (V:13) says, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms;' thus as well as St. Paul.....particularizing this kind of praise, and distinguishing it from others." (16)

From the very beginning, Psalm-singing was a major element in the worship of the Early Church. It is difficult to ascertain when hymns began to be used, but it is very probable during the life of St. Paul, since he encourages the use of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." It is evident that shortly after Pentecost Christian hymns supplemented the use of Jewish hymns which were publicly sung by congregations, responsively and antiphonally.

At least three poetical quotations are to be found in the writings of St. Paul that doubtless formed a basis for Early Church hymnody. These may have been included in the "apostolic hymn book," discovered by Dr. Rendel Harris in 1909.

In Ephesians 5:14, just preceding the admonition to sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs," we find this hymn: "Wherefore one says:

'Thou that sleepest, waken!
Rouse thee out of death,
That Christ may be thy light!'"

In I Timothy 3:16, another is discernable:

(Who was) "Manifest in flesh,
Justified in spirit,
Visible to angels;
Preached among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up to glory."

Also, in the 6th chapter, verses 15 and 16:

"Which in its own times he shall show,

'Who is the blessed and only Potentate,
The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords;
Who only hath immortality, dwelling
in light unapproachable;
Whom no man hath seen nor can see:
To whom be honor and power eternal.
Amen.'"

In II Timothy 2:11-13 is the same parallelism as before: "Faithful is the saying,

'If we have died with Him, we shall also
live with Him;
If we endure with Him, we shall also
reign with Him;
If we deny Him, He too will deny us;
If we are faithless, He abideth faithful;
Since He cannot deny Himself.'"

Doubtless public worship was the outgrowth of individual and family devotions, in which Christian song played an important part during the second and third centuries. Private devotions were not merely a required form of worship, but were the natural outburst of overflowing hearts, expressive of the spiritual elation in their souls.

Because many of the early believers in the Gospel of Christ were Jews, it is quite natural to suppose that the Psalms of David and the beautiful music of the synagogue were employed in the services of the Early Church. Gradually, however, as the adherents of this new religion increased and a larger number of Gentiles came into the fold, they created songs of their own that were distinctly Christian.

In his letter to the Emperor Trajan, about 110 A. D., Pliny the Younger testified "that the Christians offered praise to Christ as God," which is evidence of the use of other than Jewish psalms in Christian worship at the beginning of the second century.

With the exception of a group of Syriac churches

around Edessa, the Christian communions used hymns in the Greek, which was the prevalent language at this time. Until the end of the second century, the ritual used in Rome was also in Greek.

Eight such songs may be considered as the most ancient of Christian hymns, though exact dates cannot be affixed to them:

1. The Gloria in Excelsis, or "The Greater Doxology"
2. The Gloria Patri, or "The Lesser Doxology"
3. The Ter Sanctus, or "The Cherubical Hymn"
4. The Hallelujah; response to call to praise
5. The Benedicite, or "Song of the Three Hebrew Children"
6. The Nunc Dimittis: Luke 2:29
7. The Magnificat: Luke 1:46
8. The Te Deum, or "Te Deum Laudamus"

The Benedictus: Luke 1:67, may well be added.

Of the hymns used, those oddly called "private psalms," were based on the Septuagint Psalter; others, such as "Gloria in Excelsis," were "odes," based on the angels' song. A most interesting one, translated by John Keble as "Hail! Gladdening Light," is a "relic

of household worship that Basil called ancient even in his time." (ca.329-379)

But though, according to Eusebius, "there was a profusion of sacred song," in the first half of the third century, the only entire hymn extant is that of uncertain authorship, which is attributed to Clemens of Alexandria, translated by Dr. Henry M. Dexter as "Shepherd of Tender Youth."

"Whether they [these first Christian hymns] sprang first to light in a burst of choral song, like that inspired hymn in the Acts; or were bestowed on the Church through the heavenly meditations of one solitary believer; or gradually, like a river, by its tributary streams, rose to what they are, we can perhaps never know." (7)

Antiphonal singing of the Psalms was a favorite practice of the Hebrews. This method is found also among the Greeks and Romans. And tradition gives us the story that St. Ignatius of the first century in a vision, perceiving the Heavenly choirs chanting praises to the Holy Trinity in alternating singing, was seriously

impressed with it and introduced the method in Early Church singing.

2. The rise of hymn-singing out of Gnostic and Arian controversies.

As history and experience frequently reveal, an opposing agency proves to be a refining fire, a disguised blessing, or an impelling force, to a worthy movement, and so it was in the early stages of hymnody, The Gnostics, followed by the Arians, were the oldest distinctive writers of hymns, which proved alarmingly effective to the Christians in the propagation of their unorthodox doctrines. Bardesanes of the Syrian Church in the second century wrote hymns imitating the Psalms, adding Gnostic beliefs and interpretations. Valentinus and others followed him, until these heretic songs had reached a wide circulation.

Not only because they were more numerous, but also because of their popularity, the Gnostic and Arian hymns received wider recognition than those of the Christians. The latter were fewer in number than the former and were less practical, dealing largely with

church dogmas.

Already congregational singing was gradually departing from the people, but the Church was compelled, in defense of its own doctrines, to bring it into more general use again, that it might combat the heretic teachings of Gnosticism with the like-effective medium of Christian song. Orthodox words were fitted to tunes of the Gnostics, emphasizing Christ's humanity. To further defend the Christian faith, St. Chrysostom organized processions of choirs, who, bearing wax tapers and silver crosses, marched through the streets at night, singing their hymns.

Combatting this wide-spread "evil," those capable of writing hymns diligently applied themselves to the task and produced many new ones in a comparatively short time. The first name to appear in the list of hymnographers was Ephraim Syrus (307-373), a Syrian. Written in the same meters as those of the Gnostics, they served effectively as a counteracting force to the propaganda of their opponents.

Likewise the Arians promulgated their teachings

by popular hymn-singing. In Constantinople both Christians and Arians were found singing the same tunes but using different words. In spite of the riots and murders that ensued, the popular hymn-singing continued with both parties.

Associated with the hymnology of this period, called by some Ambrosian, are the names of Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine and Prudentius.

Hilary of Poitiers (ca.300-367) was among the first of the Latin hymn writers. Banished to Phrygia by Constantius, he heard the Arians sing their hymns and was stimulated to write similar songs for the purpose of propagating the orthodox faith. It was his poetic work that Ambrose adopted in his great achievement in Early Church hymnody.

Although St. Gregory of Nazianen (329-389) is mentioned by some writers as one of the earliest of hymnographers, his hymns, written during the closing years of his life, after succeeding his father as bishop of Constantinople (for two years), his hymns never passed into general ecclesiastical use.

Emperor Constantine (ca.288-337), now in power, accepted Christianity in 325, and lifted the death penalty for not worshiping the Roman gods from the believers in Christ, who for 300 years had borne the persecutions of Roman rulers. This newly acquired liberty was a further source of encouragement for the creation of Christian hymns.

Uncertainty surrounds the name of St. Ambrose (333-397) as the inventor of the system of church scales. Some writers on the subject give him full credit for the work, while others firmly deny the authenticity of the assertion. Bauer and Peyser declare: "It was St. Ambrose who worked out the first system for church music and put it on a foundation that lasted for 200 years." Baltzell affirms: "It is absolutely unknown when or by whom the system of scales, known as the Church Scales, was invented." With such doubt we are reluctant to give the Bishop of Milan of the fourth century the credit of the beginning of this important achievement.

But to Ambrose may be accorded the praise for the authorship and introduction of numerous Latin hymns.

He has been called "the father of Latin hymnology." Antiphonal singing he brought over from the East, but the hymns themselves were new. "The assembly, the fervor, the hymnody of edification, were apostolic -- the hymns were Ambrosian." (4)

In his "Confessions," St. Augustine (354-430) relates the first hearing of the hymns of Ambrose in defense of the orthodox faith against an Arian court. He also tells of the popular use of these hymns under various circumstances and in numerous places.

As Ambrose was called the father of Latin hymnody, so Prudentius (348-413) has been designated "the first Christian poet." Having denounced worldliness and given up all secular employment, he entered into private life and poverty at the age of fifty-seven years. It was from this time on that he engaged in writing remarkable sacred poems which made him famous.

There is almost as much difference of opinion between the authors named above on the plagal scales of St. Gregory (540-604), which were added to the authentic scales of St. Ambrose. The co-authors do

concede, however, that "He did not invent these scales but based them on the old Greek and Ambrosian modes." No system of notation seems to have been in existence in the time of these hymn-writers.

3. Edicts of the Early Church that led to the suppression of popular hymn-singing.

The introduction of popular hymn singing was not long to remain a household practice -- morning and evening devotions, at the break of dawn and the lighting of the candles, the "Canonical Hours" of matins and vespers. In keeping with Daniel's "three times a day," these devout Christians increased their periods of worship.

The fourth century witnessed the performance of these acts of devotion in the churches, directly by the clergy. Groups of ascetics were also being formed which necessitated the assignment of separate Psalms to the numerous hours of worship. Out of this developed the Ordo Psallendi for use in the services.

Later, when the ascetics deemed it necessary to more definitely isolate themselves from worldly surroundings and influences, they retreated to the wilder-

ness, taking with them the Ordo Psallendi, including Ambrosian hymns. Gradually these hymns became the possession of the clergy and monks and were sung only in monastic churches, or read privately by the secular priests.

"By the middle of the fourth century, if not earlier, the change was complete. The simple organization of the apostolic age had developed by logical gradations into a compact hierarchy of patriarchs, bishops, priests and deacons. The clergy were no longer the servants or representatives of the people, but held a mediatorial position as the channels through which divine grace was transmitted to the faithful." (8)

Now we are ready to raise the question as to the authority or wisdom of the church to "supercede or even enlarge the hymn book that is of canonical authority," the Psalms. One writer claims that the issue was precipitated by the Apostle to the Gentiles, and has always been a modern contention, separating the body of believers into different denominations.

The hymn of human composition was held up to sus-

picion and contest from the beginning. Not only was this due to the jealous and zealous defense of the Scriptures, but more particularly to the successful activities of the Gnostics and Arians in propagating their doctrines through their hymns.

In this connection, two canons of the Council of Laodicea, held about 363, are of interest. The thirteenth decreed: "Besides the appointed singers, who mount the ambo and sing from the book, others shall not sing in the church." The least that can be said of this decree is that it evidenced the tendencies of the day toward hierarchy and ritualism.

The fifty-ninth canon, bearing more directly on the question ruled: "Psalms composed by private men must not be read in the church nor uncanonical books, but only the canonical of the New and Old Testaments." This was the consequence of the conviction "that the freely composed hymn had become a menace." These rulings of this council of the fourth century mark the gradual but certain transition from the people's song to the priestly chant.

Another development which added to the supremacy of independent clerigical manipulation of Christian song was the arrival of the day of church building. Services must be in keeping with the architecture; singing must be in harmony with the atmosphere. To permit illiterate people to express their supplications and thanksgivings in crude vocal tones would be discordant, to say the least. So it seems that conditions developed as time went on to suppress congregational participation.

Pope Celestine, in the early part of the fifth century, introduced into the divine office antiphonal psalmody like that of Milan. About this time it appears that the liturgic priestly chant developed more systematically. It is to this century that the beginnings of the papal choir can be traced. A community of monks for special service of the canonical hours was organized by Leo I, who died in 461. When the monks of Monte Cassino came to Rome in 580, and reported the destruction of their monastery by the Lombards, Pope Pelagius received them graciously and furnished them with a dwelling-place near the Lateran basilica. The papal chapel choir was

supplied with singers from among this group. Not only were men trained as "sub-deacons" to sing in the pope's choir, but boys were given instruction in this as well as in other branches of service. The wealthiest and most distinguished families had representatives in the student body.

During the first half of the sixth century, the use of metrical hymns in addition to the Psalms was given support by Benedict of Nursia (ca. 490-546), who made hymn singing a part of the daily activities of the life of the monks, adopting the Ambrosiani for this purpose. The Council at Tours in 567 went further and declared: "There are writers beside St. Ambrose, whose hymns are beautiful enough to deserve singing, and should be received." The accompaniment of the author's name was required.

Strong opposition arose at Rome and was maintained for centuries. It was felt in Spain, Ireland, and other places. But by the seventh century, the Ambrosian hymn had gained a foothold and became a part of the Daily Office.

Shortly before or during the reign of Gregory the Great, the liturgy was in the main completed, and musical setting was given. This liturgic chant, along with the liturgy itself, became the law of the church. Thus uniformity in ritual and chant was inaugurated and imposed on Western Church congregations.

During the first six centuries, the Christian Church rejected musical instruments and introduced vocal art. "Christian music parted company with pagan art, threw the burden of expression, not like Greek music upon rhythm, but upon melody, and found in this absolute vocal melody a new art principle of which all the worship music of modern Christendom is the natural fruit." (8)

Latin hymnody contains much of increasing value. Some of the products of Latin hymn writers of the early centuries have been preserved by the church and are sung by worshiping congregations today.

Bernard of Cluny (early twelfth century) wrote one poem consisting of nearly 3000 lines, entitled De Contemptu Mundi, being a lamentation over the wicked-

ness of the world. It is very difficult of translation, because of the peculiar meter employed.

A second Bernard of the same century who is well known in the field of Latin hymnody is Bernard of Clairvaux, who wrote the hymn entitled De Nomine Jesu, originally composed of fifty stanzas.

Another outstanding poem of this author is Salve caput cruentatum. This is the second part of a hymn of seven divisions, the second section being Ad Faciem. Translated from the German, the hymn is known to us as "O Sacred Head Now Wounded."

In cataloguing the collections of Latin hymns, it has been found that there are about 3500 in various books, and of different degrees of value. There are the ones that are either poor in execution or defective in religious tone. Some are parodies; others are objectionable in point of taste and theology. On the other hand, there are those that are the "pure and true utterance of pious spirits," which bear their marks of excellence.

From the fourth to the sixteenth centuries, the

Latin hymn thrived in the liturgies and in the lives of the people. "To understand and to love these lyrics is to be better fitted for this nineteenth century of praise. Not the persecutors and the injurious, not the cruel and the cold-hearted will then remain to us; but the Dies Irae will utter its trumpet-voice above the dead phrases of a formal service, and the Salve caput cruentatum will call us afresh to the foot of the cross."⁽¹²⁾

And so the beauty and effectiveness of the Latin hymn was never lost, although the language itself became a "dead" language. It carried on through the Protestant Reformation, even to the present day. The fact is that many of the so-called Latin hymns were products of German authors.

B. The Pre-Reformation Period.

1. Conditions leading up to an outburst of people's song.

When congregational singing was suppressed by the Roman Catholic Church, the German people were granted a small part in the service to satisfy their natural instincts and desires to sing.

But this was insufficient. These people were too fond of music to be limited in such a manner. Sacred poets translated the old Latin hymns into the vernacular and made new ones. These were used on pilgrimages, at festivals, and on other occasions. Congregational singing has never been encouraged, though not entirely forbidden, by the Catholic Church, since the office of song was taken out of the hands of the laity and assigned to the clergy, it being considered essentially a liturgic performance.

"The musical system of the Catholic Church proceeded from the Gregorian Chant, which is strictly a detail of the sacerdotal office. The Lutheran music, on the contrary, is primarily based on the congregational hymn. The one is clerical, the other laic;

the one official, proscribed, liturgic, unalterable, the other free, spontaneous and democratic." (8)

Besides the difference of cleric and laic use of the hymn, another radical distinction is that the vernacular takes the place of the Latin in Reformation hymnody. Not many of the German people were familiar with the Latin language, which condition was a handicap to worship, had congregational singing been predominant in the Catholic Church. Naturally they desired to worship in their native tongue. This grand privilege was accorded them as national and independent churches arose as the inevitable result of the schism.

2. Religious folk song as a basis for Protestant hymnody.

It is necessary to go farther back than the Reformation in Germany to discover the beginning of the singing of religious songs by the common people in their own language. The religious lyric was always found to have a prominent place in the ancient German popular song. After the Teutonic tribes were converted to Christianity, they turned their musical fervor into the new channel no less ardently, using many of the

large store of hymns they formerly sang in the worship of their deities.

So much a part of the life of the people was the secular music that early church musicians used some of it for religious purposes. Love songs, drinking songs, and the like, were used as bases for masses, and the mass usually took its name from the song on which it was built.

Luther, to a great extent, followed this policy in preparation of his chorales, hence it was not original with him. Two facts, however, justify this practice: "Firstly, the folk song (even the love song) was of a very stately and dignified cast; and, secondly, the chorale was freer and bolder in the sixteenth century than in later times." (13)

Soldier' and sailors' songs, street melodies, etc., were all taken and used for the service of the church, after being purged of every element that seemed trivial, and rendered dignified and churchly by the best composers, under the supervision of the Reformer himself. During the first century of the Reformation, the German

chorales became almost innumerable.

In pre-Reformation hymns we find much that reflects the religious beliefs among the German laity. There is the extreme of the "pure, noble, and strictly evangelical, mixed with crudity, superstition and crass realism."

The manner in which the doctrines and practices of the church found lodgment in the popular heart is demonstrated by these hymns. The ideas of the religious teachers of the time, colored by the crude superstitions of the great middle class, is evident. Middle Age anthology, perversions of doctrine, are badly set forth in the religious poems. By way of illustration, two examples may be cited: The pre-existence of Mary with God before creation, as creator with him, is expressed in the hymns. To the saints is ascribed power to save from the pangs of hell.

But we must not emphasize this phase of the early German hymnody to the exclusion of the more hopeful side. "Take out everything that a severe Protestant would reject, and there remains a large body of poetry which

flows from the pure, undefiled springs of Christian faith." (8), which was equal, if not superior to, that of Luther. Tauler, in a celebrated hymn, depicts a ship sent from heaven by God, containing Jesus, who comes to earth to ask for personal devotion and loyalty, even unto death with and for him.

The Latin hymns excell in literary excellence and are about on the level in musical value, but historically the German hymns surpass their Latin contemporaries. The Latin religious verse is the work of the cloister, refined by ascetic and philosophic refinement. It is poetry of the priests and monks, for the temple, in seasons of meditation, and the like. This was too elevated for the simple layman, as it could not express his thoughts and feelings in familiar terms. And so, we find a striking similarity between the religious and secular folk songs, and observe their mutual influence.

After the tenth century, religious songs multiplied and reached a high mark in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, under the exceptional intellectual

awakening during the period of the Stauffen emperors, the Crusades, the Minnesingers and the court epic poets. This last named group carried poetic and musical inspiration to the clergy and common people, "and the love of singing at religious observances grew apace."

A practice in the fourteenth century that increased the interest of the people in religious singing and aided in the production of Reformation hymns was the adaptation of secular tunes to religious poems, and paraphrasing secular ditties with religious words.

C. The Revival of Reformation Song.

1. Influences immediately preceding the work of Luther.

The next century, fraught with unrest and premonitions of the imminent revolution, witnessed a flourishing of the popular religious song to an extent hardly exceeded during the first two centuries of Protestantism. Still controlled by Catholic discipline and doctrine, the German individualistic spirit was struggling to free itself from ecclesiastical fetters.

One of the prominent hymn writers of this period was Heinrich of Laufenburg, who entered the monastery of the Knights of St. John at Strassburg in 1445. Some of his hymns were evangelical in form, but most of them were like others of his day, in praise of the Virgin Mary or other saints.

In Bohemia and Moravia, the religious and political movements, effected by the preaching of John Huss and his early martyrdom, had a great influence on Germany. The reformers and the movements they fostered were different in some respects, yet similar in others.

In the Hussite revolt, the demand for the vernacular in church worship was even more fundamental, and came before rather than after the movement. Huss was like Luther in that he was virtually the founder of the hymnody of his people. His hymns were written in both Latin and Czech, but he urged the use of the vernacular songs by the people. The poetry of the Bohemians was based upon the Psalms, ancient Latin hymns, and old vernacular religious songs. The policy of both reformers was to improve existing texts and substitute new ones for those having doctrinal features that were objectionable. The tunes used were adapted from older religious and secular melodies.

The first song book of the Ultraquists in the Czech language was published in 1501, and three or four years later Lucas of Prague, the Bohemian bishop, collected, printed and published 400 of the best German hymns. This was the first hymn book prepared for congregational use, and antedated the first Lutheran book by about twenty years.

2. The genius of the Reformation, back to God, to Scriptures, to the vernacular, led by Martin Luther.

"No one was more familiar with it [existing conditions] than Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk. No one was better equipped to sponsor a Protestant movement to restore the hymn to the people: to restore it to its right place in worship by first making it a messenger of the gospel to men's hearts." (4)

In the convent, Luther had developed a real love for the hymns and plain song of the Daily Office. He would not exclude the Latin language entirely from the order of divine service, because of the fine music and hymnody it contained. Yet this is largely what he had to do to free the hymn from its Latin limitations, and provide a hymnody in the vernacular somewhat similar to German folk song.

Certain national traits were among the causes of the break with the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. It was consistent with the development of the liturgy in this church that the office of song be taken from the laity and placed in charge of the clergy, who

were trained to perform the functions of the office. "Not on aesthetic grounds of devotional effect, but really through a more or less distinct perception of its significance in respect to the theoretical relationship of the individual to the Church." (8) did the Catholic group repress congregational singing. The priesthood was intermediary between the worshipers and God. The worshipers were not worthy to even express themselves in song, with the exception of the oft-repeated phrase, "Kyrie Eleison" or "Christe Eleison."

With the arrival of Protestantism, the office of a human intermediary was abolished. Priesthood was (and is) the high office of each believer, with Jesus Christ as the only mediator between man and God. Thus, the clergy, to whom has been delegated certain privileges and responsibilities, and the laity, who join with them in common worship only as their leader, share in matters of polity and faith.

We can readily see, then, the cause of the struggle during the early days of Protestantism over popular song in public worship. "The emancipated layman found

in the general hymn a symbol as well as an agent of the assertion of his new rights and privileges in the Gospel.⁽⁸⁾"

It is not surprising, therefore, that these early hymns displayed militaristic traits. Political and doctrinal strifes are bound up in them. They were the vehicle by which the principle that lay at the basis of the movement was carried to the minds and hearts of the common people. They also supplied the fortitude which enabled the new faith to persist in the conflicts which tested it.

Luther's place as a hymnist has been misrepresented by both extremes. The Roman Catholics have not allowed him the credit due him as an original writer; and the Protestants have given him too much credit as a genius in this respect. As heretofore stated, Luther gleaned from sources at hand the best that could be found, as he judged it. From the Catholic liturgy he retained or improved upon that which was most desirable and rejected the rest.

"Not by comparing Roman and Lutheran liturgies do we come upon Luther's dealings with the hymn. He took it out of liturgies and put it into people's

hearts and homes, that when they had learned it and loved it they might bring it to the church and sing it together." (4)

The musical setting of his hymns was not entirely original, for much of it was taken from the popular religious music of the people. Nevertheless, his writings were sufficiently original to warrant him a place of honor as a hymnist. "It was not new forms, but a new spirit, which Luther gave to his church." (8) His familiarity with his people and their needs was of substantial benefit to him in preparing his work.

Luther did not discard the Psalms. His instructions were "Let the entire Psalter, distributed into parts, remain in use at the morning and evening service." Nor was he adverse to their being sung in Latin, where practicable. In his schools it was required that the boys are "to sing some Psalms in Latin every morning."

But along side of the Psalms, Luther placed the metrical hymn of the Latin Office, translated it into the native tongue of the people, and freed it of all restrictions of the sacerdotal office. This made it

intelligible and stimulating to those who desire to express their religious impulses in worship.

3. The authority of the Scriptures for the use of hymns.

The authority for the use of hymns with psalms the reformer found in the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul had advocated the use of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." (Eph.5:19; Col.3:16). These three terms are not usually considered synonymous, but refer to three classes of early church song, namely: 1. The Psalms of the ancient Hebrews; 2. Canticles -- Old Testament hymns outside of the Psalter; 3. Songs composed by Christians. And doubtless the injunction of the apostle to use songs as a means of teaching and admonition was not overlooked by Luther.

In regard to the right to transform a Psalm into a hymn, he assumed the prerogative of substituting the more suitable forms of expression for those he deemed unsatisfactory. He further supported the privilege of the human composition of hymns by calling "the songs of holy writ to witness that patriarchs and prophets composed original hymns," and therefore they set an example

for him and his friends to follow.

The evangelical content is the feature of the Lutheran hymn that related it most closely to the Scriptures. It was intended that the hymn, like everything else in worship, must contribute toward the presentation of the Gospel of Christ. In writing to his friend Spalatin, he stated: "What I wish is to make German hymns for the people, that the Word of God may dwell in their hearts by means of song also."

The improvements that Luther made in the form and manner of service may be stated under three captions: "1. The revision of the liturgy; 2. The introduction of new hymns; 3. The arrangement of suitable melodies for congregational use." (8)

The principal embodiment of liturgic reform is found in the two orders of worship prepared by Luther for the Wittenberg churches, the Formula Missae of 1523 and the Deutsche Messe of 1526. These were not imposed upon the churches as restrictions or obligations, but were offered more for uniformity and solidarity.

D. Hymn Writing in Germany and England.

1. The urge to creativity in hymn-writing throughout Germany, resulting in 100,000 hymns.

Luther then turned his attention to the preparation of hymns. To find them or to make them was his task. "I would that we had many German songs," he wrote to Nicholas Haussmann, pastor at Zwickau, "which the people could sing during the Mass. But we lack German poets and musicians, or they are unknown to us, who are able to make Christian and spiritual songs, as Paul calls them, which are of such value that they can be used daily in the house of God. One can find but few that have the appropriate spirit."

The need was soon supplied, for hymnists sprang up from every quarter, seemingly over-night. And most assuredly the great reformer was one of the foremost. Following his translation of the New Testament, and while he was engaged in rendering the Psalms in the vernacular, "the spirit of the psalmists and prophets came over him," as Koch declares. Taking the Psalms as his model, he wrote hymns that were more expressive

of sincere love and devotion to God for his unfailing goodness than of the teaching of dogma.

In 1523 Luther began to write hymns and continued to do so for twenty years. As much as he realized the immediate need for a large number of hymns, his high regard for quality prompted him to prepare them with care, so that he averaged only one a year.

The year after he began his work as a hymnist, the first hymn book of evangelical Germany was published by his friend and co-worker, Johann Walther. Four of the eight hymns it contained were by Luther, three by Paul Speratus, and one by an unknown author. Later in the same year, another book was published which contained fourteen more hymns by Luther, supplementing the eight of the first book. In 1525 a song book appeared, edited by Walther, in which there were six more of his creation. The remaining twelve hymns by the reformer-hymnist were published in five song books of various dates, the last being Klug's edition of 1543. Luther prefaced four hymn books, Walther's book of 1525 being the first and Papst of 1545, containing 101 hymns,

36 by Luther, being the last.

Printing presses were strained to their full capacity in making song books, which multiplied rapidly. Including numerous editions there had been no less than sixty collections issued at the time of Luther's death. The statement made by a sneering Catholic, that the people were singing themselves into the Lutheran doctrine, was literally true.

The hymn known pre-eminently as "Luther's hymn" (as if he wrote no other) is Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott, being a metrical rendition of Psalm XLVI. The date of its creation is uncertain, though it must have been in the year 1528 or 1529. The tune, probably of Luther's own composition, adds peculiar interest and power to the courageous message it presents. So popular it became and so inspiring in faith and courage to the German people that it was called by Heine, "The Marseillaise of the Reformation."

As stated, thirty-six hymns are ascribed to Luther, but most of these are not original. Dr. Julian classifies them under five headings:

1. Translations from the Latin	11
2. Hymns revised and enlarged from pre-Reformation popular hymns	4
3. Psalm versions	7
4. Paraphrases of other portions of Holy Scripture	6
5. Hymns mainly original	8
T o t a l	<hr/> 36 (16)

"No other poems of their class by any single man have ever exerted so great an influence, or have received so great admiration, as these few short lyrics of Martin Luther." (8)

A number of Luther's friends became hymn writers, and some of their productions were as popular as his own. Justus Jonas, his colleague at the University of Wittenberg, undertook the versification of the Psalms, giving special attention to those appropriate to the times in which they were living. They disclose the influence of Luther's example in this particular field.

Paul Eber, another coadjutor of Luther at Wittenberg, wrote hymns that off-set the more rugged and martial hymns of his associates. The spirit of his pro-

ductions is tenderness and consolation, which tended to induce comfort and peace within the hearts of their users.

The distressing period of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) inspired the writing of the most celebrated of all German hymns, following those of Luther. Gustavus Adolphus is the name most prominent during this period. His "Battle Hymn" or "Swan Song," sung on the eve of the Battle of Lutzen, is most famous. Originally it is known as Verzage Nicht, du Häuflein Klein.

Another name of importance at this time is Martin Rinkart, who wrote Nun Danket Alle Gott, about 1644. One of the best choral music composers, Johann Crüger, gave it the tune to which it is most generally sung. It has been designated the Te Deum of Germany.

But next to Luther, Paul Gerhardt is considered the greatest of all German hymn writers. His contributions were of a refining nature, which has been lacking in the Protestant hymnody thus far. "His poems are truly songs of the heart. He imparts into the objective realities, with which the Reformation had been so vitally

concerned, that subjective tone which marks the transition to the modern style of hymnody." (5) Of the large number of his hymns in use, translated into English, one of the most beautiful is Ist Gott Furnich, so Trete.

Luther's work as a hymn writer was not simply to infuse into the hymn the power of his "world-transforming doctrine." He raised it to a level it had never reached before, certainly since the days of the Early Church, by making it a part of the liturgy of the Protestant Church. Thus, the folk-hymn was charged with unusual proselyting power in the sixteenth century.

He taught the people that the privilege was theirs to sing praises to God; that such was an essential part of public communion with him; and that God was well pleased with the service thus rendered. The forms and expressions of worship are important, but the activity of the believer in exercising faith was paramount.

Through the congregational song was experienced the direct access of the believer to the Father, and so the whole spirit of the worship of the new Church was exemplified. To accomplish this to the fullest and

most satisfying extent, the use of the native tongue was necessary, and thus the popular hymn set to a melody appropriate and familiar "became at once the characteristic, official and liturgic expression of the emotion of the people in direct communion with God." (8)

No other people have created as great a number of hymns as is found in the German language -- totaling 100,000. Their natural love for music and the impetus of the great Protestant Revolution are largely, if not entirely, responsible for the large quantity of religious song. Wherever one finds musicians of note, either in Europe or North America, the great probability is that they are Germans or of German extraction.

2. The spread of Geneva propaganda for Psalm-singing to England and Scotland.

Psalmody may be defined as the metrical versification of the Psalms adaptable to modern methods of singing. Broadened, it may include the paraphrasing of other portions of the Scriptures. In this larger sense, the literature is found to be most extensive. Referring again to one of Dr. Julian's categories: In addition to

a list of 326 separate publications in English, which covers practically the entire Psalter, he gives about 120 minor versifications. Innumerable songs, generally recognized as hymns, but more specifically belonging to Psalmody, as well as creations in other languages, might be added to the list.

To the court of Francis I of France, who reigned from 1515 to 1547, we must go for the origin of Psalmody in its modern sense. Clement Marot, court poet, that "poet of princes and prince of poets," was induced in 1533 to occupy his time and energy in versifying the Psalms, in place of writing "profane" verse. His success was apparent, for in a few years the fifty-two Psalms, which he had constructed after the manner of his songs and published, became widely disseminated, as they were sung to popular ballad airs.

Not only did the king and queen select their favorites, but notables of the kingdom as well. Among those without the realm who were influenced were Catharine de' Medici, King Charles V of Spain, and John Calvin. After the publication of his psalmody in 1542,

Marot was persecuted by Roman authorities and fled to Geneva, where Calvin came in contact with Marot's productions and employed them by setting them to better music.

The current French song was frivolous and therefore objectionable to Calvin. He disliked any melody in any way associated with it. He was hostile to the ritual of the old church because humanly devised and destructively formal. "He would have nothing in the culcus which could not claim the express authority of Scripture." (3) "Hymns of human composure" were not sanctified to him by reason of the church's stamp of approval. "He established the precedent of church song taken from the Word of God itself, and practically confined to the canonical Psalms." (3)

After the death of Marot in 1544, Theodore de Beza (1519-1605), Geneva reformer and successor to Calvin, continued the task of improving upon the court poet's works, removing "any unseemly gaieties and fashionable allusions." After passing through two editions in 1562 the versification of all the Psalms was completed

and published. This final edition was exceedingly popular. It was translated into nine different languages, including Hebrew. "At least one thousand editions of it were issued, and its influence extended throughout the Protestant world." (5)

The French-speaking people generally adopted it, and even the Catholics used it to a considerable extent. The latter would sometimes conceal their identity by singing the melodies contained in this edition. Though England was not so much given to it as Europe, an example was set in Geneva that, to an extent, was followed in England also.

In England, where freedom of spirit and earnestness of purpose have been characteristic, the religious song or hymn has been popular. "There has been a lively English hymnody as long as there has been an English language." (19) These were sung as the people worked at the scythe, the oar or the spinning wheel to make light their hearts in their daily toil. But this began to wane just prior to the Reformation, when it could have served to great advantage in giving England as rich a

supply of hymns in the vernacular as was created in Germany.

To be sure there was in England an abundance of religious poetry set to popular melodies -- nearly every poet prepared his "Divine Poems" -- but the hymn as understood today was in disfavor. The Puritans said: "We will sing only those religious songs that are in the Bible; the poets may turn the Bible literally into rime and meter for us; we will sing that, but we will not tolerate in our public worship of God any hymn of mere 'human composure.'" Contemporary and recent hymnody was also banned by "the other and complementary party because it lacked the sanction of ancient ecclesiastical usage."

It seemed practically impossible for the Elizabethans to write hymns. Their hearts seemed powerless of generating the spirit that called forth the Psalms in their day; their ears seemed too deaf to catch the hymnic note; their minds seemed incapable of producing the hymn in its purest form. Such verse as was attempted by Wyatt and Surray was too closely patterned upon

Psalm forms.

Myles Coverdale, bishop of Exeter and translator of the Bible, published a metrical version of the Psalms in 1538, which are chiefly from the German, rather than after Marot's form. Besides fifteen Psalms this book contained the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Magnificat, in rime, and twenty other pieces of lesser importance. Although this was considered the beginning of English Psalmody, it had no decided influence.

In Scotland, however, hymns and songs, patterned after Lutheran models, were successfully introduced by the Wedderburns, contemporaries of Coverdale. Until the formal organization of the Reformed Church of Scotland, these hymns played an important part in the progress of the Reformation. But the Wedderborn Hymnody was rejected by the Scottish Church under the influence of John Knox (1505-1572), and the Genevan system of metrical Psalmody written into its constitution.

James I undertook to revise the Psalm Book then current, but his death occurred before he reached the

thirty-second Psalm. William Alexander took up the task and prepared the version known as the "Royal Psalter," because of the large part the king had had in its preparation. So determined was James' successor, Charles I, to impose upon the Scotch the Episcopacy of England that he ordered a substitution of the edition of 1636, included with the liturgy, to the exclusion of all others. Although resented by the Scotch, its influence was felt, owing to the consciousness of a need for improvement in the one they had been using.

Consequently in 1643 the famous "Rous' Version" appeared. Its author, Francis Rous (1579-1659), was a lawyer, a Presbyterian, and a Member of Parliament during the reigns of James and Charles. After seven years of amendment and revision, it was adopted and "became the Psalter of the psalm-singing churches of the English tongue for 200 years."

George Buchanan (1506-1582) is credited with being the greatest and most distinguished British psalmist. While confined in a Portuguese prison, he wisely spent his time and energy in preparing the com-

position which brought him fame. In 1548 he published the result in Latin, that being still in use in his day. This is the reason, doubtless, that he is now the least known.

And so we must look further for the originator of a metrical Psalter that did prove effective in England. Him we find in the personage of the king's groom (a position of no little importance), who was overheard one day by his Majesty to be playing on the organ for his own edification some Psalms he had versified and set to music. So well pleased was the king that he authorized him to publish them. Shortly there appeared the first edition of nineteen psalms (undated) by "Thomas Sternhold groome of ye Kyng's Maiestie's roobes," and dedicated to the king. In 1549, the year of Sternhold's death, a second edition was published containing thirty-seven Psalms.

Continuing the good work, John Hopkins, a minister in Suffolk, prepared a third edition, with seven other Psalms, which appeared two years later. Finally in 1564 Hopkins completed an edition in which all the

Psalms were translated. Though the verses were rough, sometimes crude and absurd, this became one of the most popular books ever published in England. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, it had passed through no less than fifty editions.

While "Bloody Mary" carried on her persecutions in England, a number of English and Scotch Protestant refugees met at Frankfort-on-the-Main, formed a religious congregation, and selected John Knox as their pastor. Later, about the middle of the sixteenth century they retired to Geneva, where a distinct church was formed. A "Book of Order" was prepared, which was completed by the addition of the altered Psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins, in 1556.

In passing, it will be of interest to note that several Psalms and tunes used today, such as "Old Hundredth" with the familiar words, "All people that on earth do dwell," may be traced to this Anglo-Genevan Psalter.

What was commonly known as the "Old Version" of the Psalms became the most important work in English

up to this time. The first edition, closely followed by a second, appeared in 1562. It contained, not only the 150 Psalms in verse, but other metrical versions as well, such as the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the "Veni Creator," "Venite," "Te Deum," and others. For 134 years, or until the Restoration, it was in used in England.

The nearest to a real hymn book during this period was one prepared by George Wither in 1623, with the patent of King James as its approval. It contained "canonical" poems, as well as productions of his own. It revealed the fact that its author was keen enough to discern Sternhold and Hopkins' metrical Psalms could not be classed as good poetry, and that it was within the ability of someone with proper insight and understanding to improve upon them.

But he was not the man nor was his day the opportune time. His idea of a good hymn was not as elevated as is necessary to produce one. Furthermore, he did not have the support of the public "to pass sympathetically upon his efforts and to furnish the com-

munal feeling without which it seems impossible for a good hymn to be produced." (19)

The book, then, may be considered a failure, as far as English hymnody at that time is concerned. It was an age for "Psalms in meeter" for religious singing. Free hymns were not yet "in season," and Wither was not prepared to write them.

In London in 1696 was published the "New Version" of the Psalms, which superceded the "Old Version" of the previous century. Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady are responsible for this new edition. Not because it was such a great improvement over that of Sternhold and Hopkins -- though its literary standard was slightly higher than that of its predecessor -- but because of commercial influence and royal approval it was generally adopted. In subsequent editions, changes and additions were made and other hymns added.

Thus is evidenced the influence of the Psalms in meter in the Scottish and English churches. The English hymn had a titanic struggle to emerge from the bias of Psalmic restraint. Through two hundred

years it lay dormant, awaiting the courage of a broad mind, a keen intellect, a sensitive heart, to cultivate it. When it did succeed, its early advocates and supporters were all but anathematized. But such hymnists as Dr. Isaac Watts, followed by others like him, were equal to the task.

3. The ascendancy of the hymn in the Eighteenth Century.

The climax in the development of Psalmody came in 1707 with the publication of Dr. Watts' "Imitation of the Psalms of David in the language of the New Testament." Before the beginning of the eighteenth century, psalmody had degenerated in spirit and content to a low estate. So a leader like Watts -- a gifted minister of the Independents, with the self-confidence of youth, and courage to bear the reproach of the change -- was greatly needed.

In substance, his contention was: that the Psalms was not a Christian but a Jewish book -- to be used by Christian churches they must be rewritten according to New Testament standards and teachings; that Christians were not under obligation to "sing the Bible" -- that

was God's Word to them, and hymns should represent their words to God; that the Metrical Psalms were not purely the word of God -- to be so, prose, not poetry, must be used.

Dr. Watts did not intend to eliminate metrical psalmody entirely from Christian worship. He classified it as "a department of Christian song whose sense and materials were taken from the Bible." (4) Hence, in his "Psalms of David Imitated" (1719), he demonstrated his position in an admirable way. These became the connecting link or transition from the old degenerated psalmody to the twentieth century hymnody.

It would hardly be fair to English hymnody nor to the Methodist movement, that played so important a part in English and American church history, to fail to mention the Wesleys, especially Charles (1707-1788). John admitted that his was only a small part in the large amount of Wesleyan hymnody. The fine translations from the German may be accredited to him, but Charles was the real hymnist of the movement.

As many as 6500 hymns are attributed to the

younger brother, many of which are of inferior quality, but a surprisingly large number of which attained a high degree of excellence. Thus he expressed his own private and public emotions most effectively.

Differences of opinions prevail regarding the comparative values of the hymns of Watts and Wesley, due largely to differences of temperament and taste. Breed sums them up:

"Watts is so profoundly impressed with the majesty of God that he appears to shrink from familiarity in his expressions of divine fellowship..... Wesley, on the other hand, seems so intimate with his Redeemer as to be incapable of expressing a sense of his awful majesty. Watts is more reverential; Wesley more loving. Watts is stronger; Wesley sweeter. Watts appeals profoundly to the intellect; Wesley takes hold of the heart. Watts will continue to sing for the Pauls and Peters of the church; Wesley for the Thomases and Johns." (5)

III.

CONCLUSION

A. The Continual Conflict in Christian Song.

Christian song has not come to maturity without struggle and conflict. From the beginning it was a contest between Psalmody and Hymnody, which has hardly ended in this day.

When Protestantism began to assert itself, especially through the medium of congregational song, there appeared two separate streams of division, having as their respective sources, Luther and Calvin. The former led in the production and dissemination of the hymn, while the latter championed the Psalm version. For no less than two and a half centuries these opposing systems prevailed.

In Germany, a rich body of hymnody was immediately developed upon the instigation of congregational song. Not until the eighteenth century did any effective hymnody develop in England. The reason is obvious. In England and Scotland the Psalmody of Calvin was adopted instead of the Hymnody of Luther, and so the Christians of these two countries became psalm singers rather than hymn singers. The Metrical Psalm thus became the sub-

stitute for the Hymn, and prevented the production and use of English hymns for so long a period.

In the eighteenth century, when the tenacity of the Anglican Church for Psalm versions was broken, there arose writers of hymns that lifted hymnody to such a high level, literarily as well as musically, that the hymn gained steadily, until it had established itself along side of the psalm.

B. The Present Status.

The present-day attitude of the Church has come about as the result of experimentation with the two standards set up by Dr. Watts in "Psalms and Hymns." The admission of the human hymns to an equality with the divine Psalms was effected because the people felt a greater impulse to sing the gospel than to sing the Psalms. Moreover, the appeal of the hymn was greater.

Consequently the Hymnal superceded the Psalms and Hymns as the Psalms and Hymns had replaced the Psalms in Meter. The Psalm versions found in modern hymnals are usually kept there for their intrinsic worth more than for obligation to cling to the letter

of the Scriptures. Paraphrasing a Scripture passage is not objectionable, however, provided the result meets with the standard and need of twentieth century churches.

The very recent trend seems to be toward a larger number of Psalm versions in the hymn books. The desire of the Christian people, led by the ambition of the hymnographers, is to offer a loftier type of hymn than is produced by some publishers. This is indeed a good sign, for it indicates a more appreciative attitude of higher types of hymns for public worship -- hymns that possess the emotional element but include the intellectual factor as well.

In Scotland and in some denominations in the United States metrical Psalms still maintain their standing. They are sung to the exclusion of the human made hymn. In other denominations the Psalms are gaining a slight advancement over their place in the last century. Thus we observe that the Scriptures are still exerting an influence over the hymn book, and it yet remains to be seen to what an extent in our generation.

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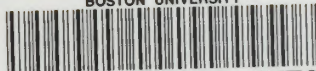
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